

## Frequently Asked Questions about Water Restrictions Starting April 18, 2008

Click [here](#) for a water restrictions [reference map](#).

**What lawn watering schedule will be in place in Broward, Collier, Miami-Dade, Monroe, St. Lucie and in coastal areas of Lee, Martin and Palm Beach counties beginning April 18?**

Lawn irrigation for all property sizes is allowed two days a week on the following schedule:

- Residents and businesses with **odd**-numbered street addresses may water lawns and landscapes on **Wednesdays** and **Saturdays** from 12 a.m. to 10 a.m. and/or from 4 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.
- Residents and businesses with **even**-numbered street addresses, no street address or irrigate both even and odd address within the same zones, including multi-family units and homeowners associations, may water lawns and landscapes on **Thursdays** and **Sundays** from 12 a.m. to 10 a.m. and/or from 4 p.m. to 11:59 p.m.

For the most efficient use of water, residents should avoid irrigating during both time periods on the same day.

**Does this new schedule include the City of West Palm Beach?**

Yes. Residents of the City of West Palm Beach and customers outside of the city limits who receive their water utility services from the City of West Palm Beach can also follow the new twice-weekly watering schedule.

**How much of these expanded watering opportunities should I use to irrigate my lawn?**

Lawns and landscapes need to receive only three-quarters to an inch of water each week. This means it can take as little as two hours of irrigation per week to keep the lawn healthy, and there may be no need to water the lawn at all if it has rained during the week.

**Instead of changing the designated watering days, why weren't more days added to the current schedule?**

We are returning to the same Wednesday/Saturday and Thursday/Sunday schedule used before water supply conditions made it necessary to move to once-weekly watering. Under this schedule, every address has a weekday and weekend day opportunity to irrigate, while maintaining Fridays as a no watering day for everyone.

Lawn irrigation can use up to 50 percent of the available daily water supply. Limiting it to two consecutive days with at least one no-watering day in between will reduce stress on the water supply. Some water utility companies could face water pressure problems if irrigation was allowed for several days in a row, for example, from Monday through Thursday.

**Where will once-weekly watering restrictions remain in effect after other areas move to altered restrictions on April 18?**

**Dania Beach, Hallandale Beach, Lake Worth and Lantana** and portions of unincorporated Lee County, including the **Lehigh Acres** area, will remain on once-weekly watering restrictions.

- In **Dania Beach, Hallandale Beach, Lake Worth and Lantana**, odd-numbered addresses can water lawns and landscapes on **Mondays** from **either** 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. **or** from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. **Even**-numbered addresses can water lawns and landscapes on **Thursdays** from **either** 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. **or** from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m..
- In the **Lehigh Acres** area of Lee County, irrigation is permitted once a week based on the address. For addresses ending in:
  - 1 or 2, water on Monday from 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. OR from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
  - 3 or 4, water on Wednesday from 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. OR 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
  - 5 or 6, or without a numbered street address, water on Thursday from 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. OR 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
  - 7 or 8, water on Saturday from 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. OR 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
  - 9 or 0, water on Sunday from 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. OR 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

**When can I water newly planted sod, trees or other landscaping?**

Additional days and times are available for new plantings:

- New landscaping can be watered without regard to restrictions on the first day it is installed.
- Landscaping that has been in place from 2 days to 31 days can be watered on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and/or Sundays.
- Landscaping that has been in place from 31 days to 60 days can be watered on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.
- Additional watering days can only be used to benefit new landscaping, and an entire irrigation system zone may only be watered if it contains at least 50 percent new landscaping.

**Is anyone automatically exempted from these restrictions?**

Yes. Because 100 percent of the water used by the **Town of Highland Beach** in Palm Beach County is drawn from the Floridan Aquifer, these customers are exempt from current restrictions.

**Do these restrictions apply to South Florida residents using 100 percent reuse or reclaimed water for irrigation?**

Irrigation using 100 percent reclaimed water is allowed from **12 a.m. to 10 a.m. and/or 4 p.m. to 11:59 p.m. six days per week**, with NO irrigation allowed on FRIDAY. Water reclaimed from water sewage treatment plants is not meant for drinking and is used almost exclusively for irrigation. It is usually transferred through purple pipes.

**What lawn watering schedule will be in place in Orange, Osceola, Charlotte Highlands and Polk counties beginning April 18.**

Several counties are divided by the South Florida Water Management District and another of the state's five water management districts.

- **Orange and Osceola counties** should follow lawn irrigation restrictions set by bordering St. Johns River Water Management District. Their restrictions are online at: <http://sjr.state.fl.us/irrigationrule/index.html>.
- **Charlotte, Highlands and Polk counties** should follow lawn irrigation restrictions set by the Southwest Florida Water Management. Their restrictions are online at: <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/drought/>.

**I water my lawn from a well, canal, pond or surface lake. Do these restrictions apply to me?**

Yes. Surface and groundwater sources are connected. Water in lakes and canals helps to protect private and public wells from saltwater intrusion, and helps store rainfall to recharge wells and aquifers.

**Can I hand-water my lawn?**

Yes. You can hand water stressed plants for 10 minutes per day using a single hose with an attached automatic shut-off or trigger nozzle.

**What other low-volume watering methods are allowed?**

Drip, bubble and micro-jet systems that apply water directly to root plant zones may be used any time. However, a voluntary reduction in use is encouraged, and any low-volume system should not produce water runoff. Watering cans are also low-volume and can be used anytime.

**When can I wash my car or boat?**

Anytime. Vehicle washing is not restricted, but voluntary conservation is encouraged. When washing a car, park it over a non-paved or porous surface to limit water runoff, and always attach an automatic shut-off or trigger nozzle to your hose. Limit boat rinsing to 15 minutes after it has been in salt water.

**My organization is scheduling a fundraising car wash. Do we need to apply for a variance?**

No. There are no restrictions on vehicle washing. Always attach automatic shut-off or trigger nozzles to hoses and, if possible, channel runoff water to a grassy area or porous surface.

**When can I use a water pressure washer?**

Anytime. Pressure washing is not restricted. Use low-volume equipment that produces water pressure of 1,000 pounds per square inch to 4,000 pounds per square inch. Channel runoff water onto the grass or another non-paved surface.

**Is there a way that I can get permission to change my watering day or times?**

Yes. You may apply for a variance from water restrictions. The application form is online at: [Variance Application](#), and the instruction form is online at: [Variance Instructions](#). Your application will be reviewed by South Florida Water Management District staff, and approval or denial is based on criteria listed in the [Water Shortage Plan Rule](#). For more information, visit [www.sfwmd.gov](http://www.sfwmd.gov) or call (800) 432-2045.

**What happens if I don't follow these restrictions?**

Residential and commercial water restrictions are mandatory and will be enforced by South Florida Water Management District staff, local governments and law enforcement agencies. Residential fines vary by municipality, but typically range from \$25 to \$125 for a first offense. Civil penalties for violations of restrictions by District permittees and commercial users begin at \$1,500 and can increase depending on the severity of the violation.

**How can I report violations of water restrictions?**

You may report violations to law enforcement or zoning and code enforcement agencies. Both have the authority to issue warnings and citations that can lead to fines. See the [List of County and City Enforcement Contacts](#). If you choose to notify your local law enforcement agency, please call their non-emergency number.

***For other users:***

**What are the restrictions for golf courses beginning on April 18?**

Golf courses must reduce their allocated water use by 30 percent, but are not restricted to watering at certain days or times. Where possible, golf courses should limit watering to early mornings or evenings to reduce water loss through evaporation. Permit holders must report their weekly water usage at <https://my.sfwmd.gov/watershortage>

**Does the 30 percent water use reduction rule apply to all golf courses within the South Florida Water Management District boundaries, even if the county where the course is located is divided by another water management district?**

Yes. Although some residential users in divided counties are following restrictions established by neighboring water management districts, the 30 percent water use reduction rule applies to any golf course with a South Florida Water Management District permit. This includes courses in Broward, Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Highlands, Lee, Miami-Dade, Martin, Monroe, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Polk and St. Lucie counties.

**Are any golf courses exempt from water restrictions?**

Yes. Facilities using 100 percent reuse or reclaimed water for irrigation are exempt from water restrictions.

**What are the restrictions for agriculture beginning on April 18?**

Agricultural water users in the **Lake Okeechobee Service Area** remain subject to Modified Phase III restrictions setting a 45 percent reduction in allocated water use. Agricultural water users outside of the Lake Okeechobee Service Area must reduce their allocated water use by 30 percent.

For all agricultural users:

- Overhead irrigation is not permitted from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., unless it is for stress reduction of field grown citrus nursery stock.
- Such stress reduction watering is allowed daily for 10 minutes per irrigation zone from 11:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., and from 1:30 p.m. to 2 p.m.
- Water withdraws from the C-23, C-24 and C-25 canals will stop in the Upper East Coast if those canals drop to 14 feet above sea level.

**What are the restrictions for plant nurseries in the Lake Okeechobee Service Area beginning on April 18?**

Plant nursery water users in this area remain subject to Modified Phase III restrictions setting a 45 percent reduction in allocated water use. In addition:

- Nurseries using overhead irrigation methods may apply their weekly allocation of water as needed.
- Low volume irrigation is not restricted.

**What are the restrictions for plant nurseries outside of the Lake Okeechobee Service Area beginning on April 18?**

- Nursery owners may operate overhead irrigation systems seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., for inside or shaded plants.
- Irrigation is permitted from 6 p.m. to 12. a. m. and/or from 3 a.m. to 9 a.m., for outside plants.
- Stress reduction watering is permitted from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. for 10 minutes per irrigation zone.
- No irrigation is allowed on days with sufficient rainfall. Users shall install a rainfall cut-off switch or similar measuring device to determine when there has been enough rain to stop irrigation.

**Are plant nurseries within the South Florida Water Management District boundaries required to follow these restrictions if they are located in a county divided by another water management district?**

Yes. Although some residential water users in divided counties are following restrictions established by neighboring water management districts, all plant nurseries within the South Florida Water Management District must follow these restrictions.

**Is hand-watering allowed for golf courses, agriculture, livestock and plant nurseries?**

Yes, but it should be voluntarily reduced.

**What are the restrictions for tennis courts, sports turf, equestrian riding rings and other athletic facilities?**

- To maintain safe playing field conditions, sports turf can be watered for a maximum of 20 minutes anytime between 11 p.m. on the preceding day to 8 a.m. on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. For example: watering can occur between 11:30 p.m. and 11:50 p.m. on Monday night, or from 7 a.m. to 7:20 a.m. on Tuesday morning.
- Infields can be watered twice daily, once before 9 a.m. and once after 4 p.m. for up to 10 minutes.
- No irrigation is allowed if there has been sufficient rainfall prior to scheduled irrigation. Users shall install a rainfall cut-off switch or similar measuring device to determine when there has been enough rain to stop irrigation.
- Sprigged or seeded turf areas can be watered for 10 minutes per zone from 11:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., 1:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. to 4 p.m., for the first sixty days after planting.
- Clay or Har-Tru tennis courts may be watered for up to 10 minutes daily once before 3 p.m. and once before midnight.

- Equestrian riding rings may be watered three times per week for up to 20 minutes each day. Facilities must post signs indicating which days have been designated for irrigation. No irrigation is permitted when adequate rainfall has occurred.
- Surrounding facilities and landscaping must be irrigated according to standard water restrictions.

### ***Other related questions:***

#### **What is saltwater intrusion and how is it related to water restrictions?**

Saltwater intrusion happens when saltwater from the sea flows beneath the land surface into freshwater aquifers. It is a natural process that occurs in most coastal areas, but one that can contaminate water used for drinking. Water restrictions help to ensure that there is enough freshwater remaining in the system to prevent the inland flow of salt water. A graphic showing saltwater intrusion is online at: [Saltwater Intrusion Management](#).

#### **If we're in a water shortage, why is the South Florida Water Management District releasing freshwater from coastal canals into the sea?**

The South Florida Water Management District is storing as much water as possible, but there are limits in a system that was designed for flood control. Many communities, particularly east of I-95, quickly flood following sudden rainfall. Even if it doesn't look as if your neighborhood is in danger of flooding, communities upstream or downstream may need flood relief that can only happen if water levels in canals are low enough to accommodate runoff. The South Florida Water Management District is always exploring options to reduce the amount of water released to tide, but this is a normal part of critical flood control operations. For details about how the flood control system works, read [Know the Flow](#).